The Seed Sower.

A Magazine for the Church, the School, and the Home.

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The Earth and Man.

A little sun, a little rain,
A soft wind blowing from the west—
And woods and fields are sweet again
And warmth within the mountain's breast.

So simple is the earth we tread,
So quick with love and life her frame,
Ten thousand years have dawned and fled,
And still her magic is the same.

A little love, a little trust,
A soft impulse, a sudden dream,—
And life as dry as desert dust
Is fresher than a mountain stream.

So simple is the heart of man,
So ready for new hope and joy;
Ten thousand years since it began
Have left it younger than a boy.

STOPFORD A. BROOKE.

To an Oxford Aesthete.

Yes, you have drained the nectar to the lees,
And fed on sweets ambrosial in the day
Of Nature's mortal ripening decay,—
Nurtured on classic soil in Orient ease,
And you can cite old Homer, as you please,
And Socrates' plain wisdom, to display
Your later fancies in the ancients' way.
Ah, sorry prater, matched with such as these!
Would God, that Attic art and Attic thought
And Roman will were yours! We, simpler bred
And sterner used of Nature, only see
A tinsel show of art for art's sake sought,
O'er-garbled thoughts that desecrate the dead,
And puny wills—mere pose and mockery.

H. HAROLD JOHNSON.

"My Lord."

A SERMON BY EDWIN P. BARROW, M.A.

JOHN XX., 13.—"They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him."

There is not a more pathetic figure in story than that of Mary Magdalen by the empty tomb. She speaks with averted look, as speaking to herself. Her words are few, and piteously indefinite, for her grief is heavy and stupefying. But they are strongly personal. A little while back it had been, "They have taken away the Lord, and we know not where they have laid him." Now, by the grave again, and alone, her grief is at its worst and cannot think beyond itself—"*My* Lord, *I* know not." Her loss, her helpless ignorance, quite fill her mind.

Mary, of Magdala, comes before us for the first time in the 8th chapter of the Third Gospel. There we learn that she was one of several women who followed Jesus as he preached in Galilee, and "ministered unto him of their substance." In a time of pressing need, when the strain of labour was so great that he hardly had leisure so much as to eat, they charged themselves with his maintenance. It was not unusual for women of means and position to do this for Teachers whom they revered; for a Rabbi might not, even if willing, take fee or payment, or make his teaching a livelihood. Some of that little band had special reason for devotion. That which they gave, they gave as a thank-offering. They had suffered from various disorders, had even believed themselves to be possessed by evil spirits. They had felt the

presence of the Master as a healing power. He had rescued them from self-torture, melancholy, despair. He had restored them to themselves, restored them to the love of those from whom they had been estranged. What could they do but hang upon his steps, and make his bodily wants their care, whose spiritual strength and calm had wonderfully soothed and refreshed their need? Upon no one had this balm fallen more sweetly than on Mary Magdalen, whose distress—mental or moral, we know not which—had been so great that, in the common talk, she was said to have been possessed by seven devils. The power of all this evil had been swept away. She was in her right mind. She also must wait upon him. There was that which she might do for him who had done so much for her. To be near him was to be safe. There were no hometies to keep her back. Little would men love her whom devils had made their prey. All her heart's affection went out to him who had swept and garnished it, and freed it from all fear. There were little tasks which she could do when the preacher wanted in his turn the ministry of woman's thought and care. Long would she wait, and he would only know that she was near by these passing offices of watchful love. Then came the last journey to Jerusalem, and three Evangelists tell us that the women followed still. Again and again they are lost in the crowd, and no mention is made of them. But twice they stand conspicuously grouped together—at the cross, and at the sepulchre. And twice this woman's form stands out distinct. It is she who, with Mary, the mother of the Lord, presses near enough to the foot of the cross to hear his dying words, she who waits till the body is taken down, and helps to give it hasty burial before the Sabbath should begin. The next night she is in the garden again, with sweet spices and anointing oil, ready, with the first streak of light, to finish what she had been compelled to leave undone. Then follow in quick succession the discovery that the tomb is empty, her instinctive flight to call for help, her meeting with Peter and John hurrying that way, her return with them, her standing alone when they had gone, unable to think, but feeling in every part of her frame that the body, dead though it be, is not there, and then a woman's wail of natural, self-centred sorrow, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him."

There is one thing I would have you observe. To this woman had been given no hope of the Resurrection. Her words, her actions, make that clear. She cherished nothing except her love for that which, in her own hopeless words, had been "taken away." Her love was the pure love which looks for nothing more. And yet death itself cannot arrest it. He is still her "Lord."

It is sometimes asked with shallow wonder why those who have ceased to believe in the Deity of Christ, as defined in orthodox creeds, still cling to the Church of their old faith, and do not attach themselves to some Church in which that doctrine is not held. Many reasons might be given; I will give you one. And first let me say that to think your way out of theological belief is by no means to think yourself out of the Church to which that belief belongs. Church-membership is something more than doctrinal assent. It has its convictions, but it has also its affections, and, when those have altered, these will often remain unchanged. Conceive for a moment the reverential habit, strong as only early habits can be, of one by whom Christ has been adored. Or, if it be easier to do so, imagine the temper, the frame of mind, of one by whom Christ's power has been felt as a presence; who has learned from earliest childhood to love him with a personal love; often unfaithful to him in action, but never unfaithful in affection; who owes and feels that he owes, whatever of good he has, whatever of spiritual knowledge, to the revelation of his teaching, the checks and encouragements of his example, the enthralling charm of his character. Recalled to himself by remembrance of him, devils of passion and of lust have gone out of him. In time of trouble or affliction, his words have been his consolation and have revived his hope. In his face God has shined in his heart. No recasting of statements as to his nature will dethrone his form. It dwells apart. He is fairer than the children of men. Is there anything to draw such an one into association with those who will perhaps ask him henceforth to think Christ into "mere man." Will it leave in him anything but a sense of deepest loneliness, like that of one who watches by an empty tomb,

a loneliness which, if it expressed itself at all, would find expression in these same words, "They have taken away my Lord."

Most of us, through ties of blood, or of friendship, of chivalrous devotion, or of hero-worship, have come into contact with lives which we never try to think down to a common level. They have seemed rather to us to move on a different plane. We have been caught up by them into an atmosphere above our own. They have been glimpses to us of that ascending order of life which rises ever upward, of which we see but a few degrees, but of which we know that it terminates only in God. We might, of course, claim kinship with them through the infirmities of the flesh, but the only bonds of which we are conscious are affinities of soul. Light has broken out to us from them, and it is the light, and not the earthen vessel which holds the light, that engages and compels our love. And love which is also reverence sees the object of its gaze from below, and the one thing you will never take away is the lordship of the higher nature over the lower. The tomb itself cannot obscure it.

Do you suppose that the mystery of the being of Christ is solved by a genealogical table? The miracle remains, remains in the simple fact that the life which was his became flesh. It is the life itself, and not its mode of entrance, with which we have to do. "Who shall declare his generation?" There are plants which hold to the earth almost by a thread, and from the earth they are little fed, but rather from the air and light and dew of heaven. And so, at the point of attachment to this present world, we may speak of a life as human, but by that point we cannot explain the whole. He who makes us to differ, so that we hardly know how to include under one name a Shakespeare, or a Newton, and an African savage, may surely hold yet wider possibility of difference in His hand. The human form is but the outward mould by which He brings Himself within the range of human sense, in order that we may see and behold and handle the presented life, which is His own. Can any one come face to face with that life, and not, with lifted eyes, dwell rather upon its source than upon the lowest degree which it has touched in its descent? There is that beyond which cannot be seen or handled, but the more constrains our homage, our allegiance, our love—the soul of one unmistakably begotten of God. It is part of God's order that His own sway should extend itself through soul to soul, through parent to child, through husband to wife, through friend to friend, through master to disciple. And it is by His appointment that a higher power than these is felt, and a higher title even than these acknowledged—the spiritual power of His Christ, and the title Lord.

Mary Magdalen mourns the Lord as dead, and yet he is still her Lord. All the evidence of death is against her, but she must say as before, "My Lord." This is one of love's instincts, to contradict the conclusions of sense; to frame even its grief in such a way as to deny that there has been any change. "Though he be dead, he is not dead." That is love's paradox. Does any one seriously bring his heart to believe that the Christ is dead, that all that is left of that which was is that which is,—

> "Blown about the desert dust,
> Or sealed within the iron hills?"

Will he think of his own life as hereafter to be raised, and not think of that life as risen? Can he withhold from it that reverence, that mindful remembrance, which he would have shown when, clothed in flesh, it crossed this mortal scene? Is he not bound to it by imperishable ties of faith and love and hope? And will he not, inconsistently, perhaps, but with less violence to himself, hold to the companionship of those to whom that Name is above every name, to whom the world of their own future will be as an empty tomb if the Lord be not there? The manner of his going, like the manner of his coming, he knows not; but he knows that heaven and earth have held him, and that heaven holds him still. There is little that he can positively pronounce, definitions he cannot easily give, but the one thing he cannot say is, "I know not where they have laid him." His faith in the risen life of Christ does not stand or fall with any one theory of his Resurrection.

Do we ask you to accept one of the many Christologies which lie open to your choice? Nay, we only ask you to remember the spiritual affection out of which Christologies spring. We honour him more by faithfulness of action than by correctness of thought. "He that hath my Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." But love is still the basis; and

this love of Christ is not a passion possible only to the highly strung Magdalens who wait upon him. It has entered into the strength of the world's strongest men, giving deep and masculine expression to their love of God. Out of their fervent loyalty grew, if you like, an exuberance of creed, and this may be taken away and laid aside; but the love itself need never be disturbed, for its resting place is not the cold tomb, but the living heart which is its shrine.

Borrowed Troubles.

There are troubles which come to us, and some which we must meet and endure at the call of duty. There are others which we must go out of our way to seek; these are what I mean by borrowed troubles. The mother of a certain little boy gave him a dime to spend. On his way to the store, it somehow slipped from his fingers, and rolled away out of sight.

He searched and searched, but it was of no use; the coin was nowhere to be found.

Here was a sad misfortune. He wept with sorrow and vexation.

Presently a kind woman, touched by these signs of woe, stopped to enquire what the matter was; and, on learning of his loss, she opened her purse, and gave him ten cents. Eagerly the boy grasped the kindly gift, his eyes brightened, a smile began to creep into the corners of his mouth; and then, all at once, he broke into fresh lamentations. "Why, what is the matter now?" exclaimed his astonished benefactor. "Haven't you got your ten cents?" "Yes," sobbed the lad; "but, oh, if only I'd got the one I've lost, too, then I should have twenty cents."

He had suffered loss, and it had been fully made up to him. That ought to have ended the difficulty; but no, he must needs go back to what had been settled and atoned for, and borrow troubles out of the past—a morbid, unreal, phantom trouble.

And such is the strange constitution of the human mind that these phantoms are often capable of producing as much disturbance, misery, unhappiness, as real and genuine calamity. We see this occasionally in sickness.

Illness is always a hard thing to bear—a serious misfortune; but do we not sometimes see it made much more serious and much more hard to bear by vain imaginings, by useless excursions into the experiences of other people, by a minute and constant dwelling on things that have happened to some one else, by a querulous nursing of fancies about what may occur some time in the future, by borrowing trouble, when we have quite as much as is good for us of our own?

There is an old Persian fable which illustrates this:—

An inhabitant of Teheran one evening met a stranger at the gate coming into the city, and asked him his name and business.

"My name is cholera, and my business is to destroy the inhabitants of this town."

The Persian who, for some reason or other, had influence with the ghastly visitor, entreated him not to slay them all, and finally extorted a promise that the number to be taken should only be two thousand.

But eighteen thousand died; and the Persian, meeting the angel of death one night in the street, upbraided him with breach of faith.

"Man," he replied, "know that I have kept my word. I slew two thousand, and no more; the rest, sixteen thousand in all, died of sheer terror."

Died, in fact, of borrowed troubles. The calamity would have passed them by harmlessly; they made it fatal by adding what did not belong to it or to them.

> Half the ills that flesh is heir to
> Wouldn't really be so bad
> If we didn't always thereto
> Add the ills it never had.

Another evil which results from this habit is that it gives us a wholly wrong idea of the nature of life, and therefore of the nature of him whose gift life is.

It makes us think existence is a poor kind of thing. I have noticed that those who hold the gloomiest views are not those who really have great burdens, but those who fancy they have them.

There is a little Russian story that bears upon this point. Human nature appears to be very much the same there as here.

Once upon a time there lived a farmer, who went about complaining of the burdens of misfortune he had to carry.

One day he happened to stumble upon a cave in which lived a wise old man, who, when he heard the farmer grumbling about his fate, upbraided him.

"I should very much like to have a look at these troubles that we all have to carry," said the farmer.

"Very well," answered the other; "come to my cave at midnight of the first day of the month, and I will show you all the troubles and burdens of the world."

So away went the farmer, and he thought the time went very slowly until the first day of the month, and there he was on hand at twelve o'clock sharp.

Sure enough, the wise old man was there; and he made the sign of the cross upon him, and blessed him, and then took him into the cave. There he saw a number of sacks. "What are they," he asked.

"These are the troubles and burdens," was the answer.

So the farmer began to try them all. Some were little, and some were large. In many cases the smallest ones were heavier than the largest.

They were all heavy, however, and uncomfortable. Finally, he happened to pick up one large bag, which was very soft; and, when he flung it on to his back, he was delighted to feel how nicely it adapted itself to his shape, and it seemed quite light in comparison with the others.

"Now," exclaimed he, "if I could only have a burden like this to carry instead of the sort I have, life might be worth living."

"O, foolish one," said the wise old man, "this is your very own burden."

Sure enough, when the farmer looked, there was his name on the bag. Since that time he has never complained about what he had to bear. Observe, he was cured of the unhappy habit of borrowing trouble, by striking a balance between the realities of his own case and those of others, and he had learned he was carrying the burden he was best fitted to bear.

There are many occasions when it is a good thing to strike a balance and see how things actually stand. It gave this man a new idea of the worth of the life God had given him. He would go about his business ever after in a different spirit. I think his faith in the goodness of God would be more firmly established. Faith rests, in the long run, on our judgment concerning the nature of life.

This man had a wrong and twisted view of it. He went about murmuring and complaining that it was a burden and a misery, and not worth having. He became a pessimist, a cynic, a scorner of all things.

And he was this, not because his life was really an evil gift; not because God had really ill-used him; but simply because he borrowed troubles, and then forgot they were not his own.

We know of people who borrow things, and then forget they do not own them. The effect of that is bad.

But the worst of all comes when we borrow troubles. H. T. Mott.

Short Creed and Strong Faith.

Creed and faith are not convertible terms. The longer the creed, the weaker the faith; and the stronger the faith, the shorter the creed. We are sure the truth of this will be challenged by many. But a cursory examination of the history of the leading religions will convince everyone of this important fact. When a faith is first started, the disciples are well enough contented with a single belief. They find in the life and utterances of their leader an abiding source of strength. Their hopes and wishes are centred in the short formula prepared in obedience to their first impulse; and if doubts arise they have simply to resort to their leader to have them dispelled. When the age of inspiration passes away, when the genial presence of the founder and his disciples is wanting to infuse strength and hope into the next generation, when the heart panteth for light and the soul sickens into despair, it is then that props are required to support the declining soul, and a creed becomes necessary to take the place of that interchange of voices in the spirit by which the truly faithful find wisdom and purity in the words of the Most High. When Christ preached, His whole creed was summed up in the following words:—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." At the present day even thirty-nine articles and three creeds are not enough to bind refractory hearts to the service of God.—*Chuder Sen.*

Ruskin's "Seven Lamps of Architecture" considered as Parables.

I.—THE LAMP OF SACRIFICE.

This great book of Ruskin's does not so much concern itself with the practical rules of Architecture, as with the Divine conditions affecting man as a building creature, and the work of his hands as the expression of his mind. It has been said that the whole history of mankind may be read in its buildings. The Pyramids of Egypt, the Temple of Baalbec, the Mosques of Islam, the lake dwellings and cave dwellings of our far-off ancestors, the Coliseum at Rome, the Parthenon at Athens, the great Catherals of Rouen, Canterbury, Chartres, and Lichfield, and many another, are all vocal with the life, the prayers, the faith, the ethics of their several builders. They tell us what sort of men they were who reared these columns, laid these courses, carved these capitals, and better than any ancient manuscript is the record of their stones. The architecture of his great temples is a language of man's mind. Ruskin rightly insists that Architecture means far more than mere "building:" it means the expression of thought and feeling and life in and upon the building. There may be building, even of a church, without Architecture. For Architecture deals chiefly with those characters and features of an edifice which are over and above its common use, those features that contribute to man's mental health, power, or pleasure. Now the expression of thought and feeling upon buildings is never so markedly apparent as in "hallowed temples and fanes of prayer," for it is upon such that the greatest care and the most significant symbolism have been lavished. The great churches and cathedrals of Christendom more perfectly illustrate the power and beauty of Architecture than any other buildings under the sun, simply because they are the expression of man's noblest faith and character. They are, in Ruskin's view, first of all a sacrifice, involving the giving of the best work and the costliest material, not primarily with a view to the comfort of the generations of worshippers to follow, or their mental elevation, but as an expression of the adoring love and gratitude of the builders. They poured out their wealth of time, labour, material, skill and thought upon these buildings with no calculating hand, but with the generous, spontaneous impulse which the woman displayed when she poured her costly ointment on Jesus. No question of utility was in that woman's heart,—only adoring love. And it was not primarily a question of utility with the builders of Bayeux or Westminster Abbey, but of expressing their awe, reverence, delight, gratitude. They made great sacrifices of their best and costliest, only they were sacrifices not of pain but of joy.

In showing how this had been done by the great Gothic builders, Ruskin compares the luxury of modern private houses with the shoddy of our modern Gothic churches. The spirit of devotional Architecture, the spirit which seeks to express honour, awe, reverence, gratitude, and adoring love is the spirit which offers for such work precious things simply because they are precious, not as being necessary to the utility of the building, but as an offering of sacrifice and praise. Ruskin, in a noble passage, notes the objection which is made to this course:—

> That a better and more honourable offering is made to our Master in ministry to the poor, in extending the knowledge of His name, in the practice of the virtues by which that name is hallowed, than in material presents to His temple. Assuredly it is so: Woe to all who think that any other kind or manner of offering may in any wise take the place of these! Do the people need places to pray, and calls to hear His word? Then is no time for smoothing pillars or carving pulpits; let us have enough first of walls and roofs. Do the people need teaching from house to house, and bread from day to day? Then they are deacons and ministers we want, not architects. I insist on this, I plead for this; but let us examine ourselves, and see if this be indeed the reason for our backwardness in the lesser work. The question is not between God's house and His poor; it is not between God's house and His gospel. It is between God's house and ours. Have we no tesselated colours on our floors? no frescoed fancies on our roofs? no niched statuary in our corridors? no gilded furniture in our chambers? no costly stones in our cabinets? Has even the tithe of these been offered?

Our homes are splendid, beautiful, luxurious,—why not our churches? What is to be said of the feeling which would arch over our own gates and pave our own thresholds, and leave the church with its narrow door and foot-worn sill: the feeling which enriches our own chambers with all manner of costliness, and endures the bare walls and mean compass of the temple. And in a paragraph which Ruskin calls an aphorism, he says:—

> I am no advocate for meanness of private habitation, I

would fain introduce into it all magnificence, care, and beauty where they are possible; but I would not have that useless expense in unnoticed fineries or formalities; cornicing of ceilings and graining of doors, and fringing of curtains, and thousands such; things which have become foolishly and apathetically habitual—things on whose common appliance hang whole trades, to which there never yet belonged the blessings of giving one ray of real pleasure, or becoming of the remotest or most contemptible use—things which cause half the expense of life, and destroy more than half its comfort, manliness, respectability, freshness, and facility. I speak from experience. I know what it is to live in a cottage with a deal floor and roof, and a hearth of mica slate; and I know it to be in many respects healthier and happier than living between a Turkey carpet and gilded ceiling, beside a steel grate and polished fender. I do not say that such things have not their place and propriety; but I say this, emphatically, that the tenth part of the expense which is sacrificed in domestic vanities, if not absolutely and meaninglessly lost in domestic discomforts and incumbrances, would, if collectively offered and wisely employed, build a marble church for every town in England, such a church as it should be a joy and a blessing even to pass near in our daily ways and walks, and as it would bring light into the eyes to see from afar, lifting its fair height above the purple crowds of humble roofs.

Which things sound strange and revolutionary in the ears of a generation that delights in Turkey carpets rather than books, and aspires to the gilded ceilings and polished fenders far more than it aspires to have the daily friendship of Dante, Goethe, and Wordsworth, and would never think of begrudging £50 for a pair of curtains, but would think it wasteful extravagance to spend £50 a year on literature.

Let us return to the Temple. What is wanted, says Ruskin, is not the Church building, but the sacrifice and art of adoration; not the gift but the giving; not the nice calculation, "How much can we get for our money?" but "How best may I express the love I feel?" What costliness of sacrifice and effort will best image the honour and reverence in my heart? Whatever the gift, let it be the best of its kind! Let not the sacrifice be with pain and reluctance; let it be with joy and willinghood.

Now it is this idea of the delight there may be in sacrifice we find illustrated in our abbeys and cathedrals. They were costly both in material and labour; they were lavish in their use of ornament; they were built of the best. It was a sacrifice men offered, but it was a sacrifice they delighted to offer. For they were honouring the great object of their love and reverence. Nothing was too great, no labour too wearisome, no gift too precious to express the feeling of adoring love which possessed them. The sacrifice was easy, the offering was a delight, because the object of their love was great and worthy.

Most people think of sacrifice as something painful, ascetic, and disagreeable, something that is necessary for the discipline of life, something that men must practice if they would escape damnation, but something that is unnatural, gloomy, depressing. Sacrifice in the common view is hard, onerous, against flesh and blood, but it is a condition of salvation, and so we must observe it.

Yet our great churches are a perpetual witness to us that sacrifice may be delightful. Is it true? Well, listen to this saying of the great apostle:—"I, Paul, who now rejoice in my sufferings for you." What! can a man rejoice in sufferings? Yea, surely, when the suffering is for those he loves. Given a great object of love, be it child, friend, wife, or country, and it is a delight to serve it, and to sacrifice for it, and to show our affection even through tears and blood.

Where in all the world is sacrifice most commonly found, and where in all the world is joy most beautiful? Behold, a mother forgetting her pain for joy that a child is laid on her bosom. With what sorrow and pain the child was born; how sorrow and pain endear that child to the mother's heart. The child is sick and the mother sacrifices everything for its sake. Balls, parties, concerts, the visits of friends, the reading of books, gaieties, health, all are sacrificed to waiting on that little one. Night and day she has it in her arms. She that was sought out in all companies, she that was full of wit and laughter and song, she that was universally admired, is now a drudge and a slave, shut up in a narrow room, and all for a child that scarcely knows her and can give no sign of gratitude or affection in return. But does she count her sacrifices a hardship? Does she regret them? Would she give up her place by that tiny cot? No, she "Moves with inward glory crowned," and in that sacrifice has found the deepest joy of life.

Or consider how young Italy sacrificed itself at the call of Mazzini and Garibaldi. All the youth of that fair land became exalted in the joy and glory of sacrifice. It was a joy to take part

in liberating their country, a joy to be permitted to put on the red shirt, to fight in the ranks, and to shed one's blood for Italian unity. It was given to them to feel sure, as it is not often given to men vividly to feel, that they, too, were their country's saviours. They sprang to the front, and faced the Austrian bayonets and Bomba's bullets with all the enthusiasm of devotees. Their country was their religion. Nothing that she might demand was too great or costly for offering. It is easy to say they were fired by the poetry and romance of the thing. These are mere words. The essence of it was that their self-sacrifice was for an altogether worthy object, and was vivid and distinct. They left home, friends, and sweethearts, and safety and comfort. But they left with songs and trumpets in their hearts, and their self-sacrifice was not a drawback on their joy: it was a part and parcel of their joy. No safe and easy task could ever have filled their hearts with such a deep and passionate delight.

So it will be found that when sacrifice is most complete, when it is sacrifice for an object, a cause, a truth, a person, to which we have given our hearts, sacrifice is a joy and the expression of a joy deeper than words. From the moment, for instance, that a man forgets to be selfish, and begins to live for other people, his nature, which had no joy in it before, becomes jubilant with music. He tastes a joy so exquisite in its flavour as to put all other joys out of comparison. There is a spring in every movement, a sparkle in every thought, an eagerness, an interest in life which has come to him just in proportion to his abandonment of selfishness and his complete sacrifice to a noble object. It is not that sacrifice does not bring pain. Indeed it does. There is a crown of thorns with its sharp torture. But the pain emphasises the joy. And the door that shuts men out of the noblest region joy is just their own selfishness. Sacrifice on the other hand is a door which lets us in to the secret of life's deepest delight.

JOSEPH WOOD.

HE who is false to present duty breaks a thread in the loom, and will see the defect when the weaving of a life-time is unrolled.

The Anti-School Board Bill.

We make no apology for referring to the Education Bill of the Government under the above title. It is acknowledged by friends and foes alike to be a Bill for bringing about soon or late—soon and *not* late—the extinction of School Boards. If the Bill should pass in its present form, no self-respecting man will continue to serve on School Boards which have been placed under the heel of another and, in many cases, less competent local authority. In a very few months after the passing of the Bill the larger School Boards will probably seek dissolution, handing over their work and duties to the authority which will have the ultimate control. Whether that course will be for the good of education may be doubted, but it will be a course forced upon them by the degrading conditions of continued life offered to them. Meanwhile, it is our duty to fight against the reactionary provisions of this measure. A very clear statement of the case against the Bill has been drawn up in a memorial from the Nonconformist Ministers of Birmingham, and presented to the members of Parliament for the city. This memorial has received the signatures of over 80 Nonconformist Ministers, who feel to a man, that Nonconformity as such is bound strongly to resist this attack on the School Board system. The importance of this document is so great, as proved by the signatures attached, and it so clearly expresses the points which appeal to the Nonconformist conscience, that we feel we cannot do better than give it in full, as a statement of the case against the Bill, which our readers may find at once convenient and suggestive :—

"To the Right Hon. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN, M.P.

Dear Sir,—We, being Nonconformist Ministers of Birmingham, desire to bring before you the strong and serious objections we feel towards the Government Bill on Education now before the House of Commons. We believe that we express on this matter not only our own convictions, but those of our fellow-religionists in general. We respectfully ask your consideration of the reasons which compel us to give the Bill our most determined opposition.

1.—We are of opinion that this Bill, instead of modifying will increase the injustice which

Nonconformists already suffer on account of their religious convictions in connection with elementary education. The 27th clause of the Bill offers no adequate relief to the Nonconformists in 8000 rural parishes where Church of England Schools are the only schools available for the whole population. We have never desired the power to enter the village school and teach our own distinctive tenets. The remedy we have asked for is the establishment of a truly national and unsectarian school under the control of the representatives of the people in every district where a reasonable number of parents desire such a school for their children. The least we are prepared to be content with is that the element of popular representation shall be provided for on the management of all schools receiving Government aid.

Further, the power given to the new Education Authority to modify the code, inspect the schools and assess them for the grant will inevitably lead to the introduction of the religious controversy into County Council Elections, and thus widen the area of sectarian strife. It will be an object with the denominational party to get a County Council lenient in its inspection of their schools and favourable to their interests.

Moreover, as the same authority is to be paramount over Secondary Schools, secondary education will be marred and hindered by the same unhappy quarrels that have done so much to injure elementary education.

2.—We regard with profound indignation the preferential treatment which the Bill gives to Denominational Schools in the distribution of the new grant of 4s. per child, and in freeing them from the payment of rates. The great principle on which the Education Department has hitherto acted of equal Government Grant for equal educational efficiency is here grossly violated. The Board Schools are to be fined for not being denominational schools. The exemption of one favoured class of schools from rating introduces for the first time the vicious principle of rate-aid for sectarian and privately managed schools.

3.—We protest against this additional aid to Denominational Schools, because it is not accompanied by the least instalment of popular representation in their management. If it is said that the new education Authority to be set up by County Councils is the thin end of the wedge of popular control: we reply that the new authority will be in exactly the same relation to Denominational Schools as the superseded Education Department, and that the principle of local representative control is not advanced a step. The present managers remain as free and unfettered as before. The appointment and dismissal of teachers, the power to exclude Nonconformist children from the teaching profession, all the details and the general conduct of the schools will be, as now, in the hands of private and irresponsible persons. Their authority in the schools remains untouched. The new Education Committee will not possess a particle of influence that is not now possessed by the Education Office.

4.—While in favour generally of the principle of devolution we are of opinion that its particular application proposed in the Bill will be fatal to educational efficiency. The modifying of the code and the great and responsible function of inspection ought always to be in the hands of a strong central authority, free from local pressure, and able to secure the services of a body of the highest experts. Elementary Education is a national not a local affar. Nine-tenths of the curriculum must be in the nature of things for all children and all elementary schools alike. It is scarcely possible to begin to differentiate before the early age at which the scholars leave the schools. It is only to a very small degree that local variations are possible or desirable, and the code might easily have an elastic margin which could include whatever subject may be required by the conditions of a particular district. It is, however, the transference of the duty of inspection and the power of assessing the schools for the purpose of the Government Grant from the central to local authorities which we most emphatically condemn. The action and pressure of the Government inspection in raising the standing of efficiency has been of late years wholly beneficial. This would be poorly replaced by the visits of an inspector appointed by a body elected for quite other reasons than educational. Local inspection will certainly tend to leniency of judgment in order to secure the largest share possible of the Imperial grant.

5.—One of our strongest reasons for opposing the Bill is its manifest hostility to the School Board system, preventing its extension and crippling its action where it already exists.

We regard the proposed subordination of School Boards to County Councils, especially in large towns, as wholly uncalled for, and as paving the way first for their deterioration, and then their extinction. The School Board system which has grown up during the last twenty-five years has been in all large centres of population an unequivocal success. It has secured the voluntary services of a large body of educated men and scholastic experts, who would stand no chance of being elected on County Councils; it has done much to raise the standard of educational efficiency, and it has made its schools absolutely the best in our midst, while its triennial appeal to the ratepayers has kept it in touch with popular feeling and checked any tendency to extravagance. The power of limiting the rate for educational purposes, which it is proposed to give County Councils, would at once stop all educational progress. We fear that many of the best qualified members of School Boards would decline to serve under such humiliating conditions. It is a still further objection that the new Education Authority is not directly elected by the ratepayers, but by a nominated body. And when this authority builds and takes over schools, it is forbidden to manage them at first hand, but must appoint a body of local managers, who, once appointed, will have nearly all the powers of a School Board over its schools. We believe this delegation of management to be wrong in principle and mischievous in practice. It places such schools, paid for wholly by the people, at three removes from the popular touch; it will, in fact, ultimately bring Board Schools into much the same position as Denominational Schools, *i.e.*, that of being managed by persons who do not represent the public.

6.—Lastly, we view the proposal to enable Denominational Schools to federate, so that the special grant in aid shall be paid in a lump sum into a common purse with especial disapproval, as likely to aid in still further hindering the development of a truly national system of schools, fastening the yoke of the sectarian system upon a district more firmly than before. When this is taken in connection with the power to borrow on the security of the rates for the erection of new schools, it is probable that all future school extension will be private and sectarian instead of public and national. Denominationalism is not only to hold its own, it is to extend its borders, and make impossible the development of a representative system of education. The Bill, in fact, is a measure for the extinction of Board Schools and the unlimited extension of Sectarian Schools.

It is with feelings of dismay and disappointment we view the reactionary features of the Bill, its violent upheaval of the School Board system, which has conferred such benefits on the country, its chaos of conflicting Educational Authorities, its opportunities for promoting quarrels between rival local bodies, its widening of the area and intensifying the bitterness of sectarian strife, and its inevitable lowering of the standard of educational efficiency.

We earnestly appeal to you to give the points we have mentioned, and on which we have the strongest and deepest convictions, your consideration, in the hope that you may see your way to oppose their being carried into effect."

"Beauty is Truth."

Is there no soul of Beauty, sweet and pure,
And true, that with immortal kiss can burn
Into our souls its fire divine, can turn
Our thought, our love, our life from false to sure?
Shall Gothic temples rise and not endure?
Shall fickle peoples in the future spurn
The flowers of God, our children's children learn
To mock our fitful fancy immature?

Nay, rest assured, a deathless Beauty lights
The angel-face of Truth; and thus we see
One radiant loveliness illumes the heights
Where all the bright and glorious company
Of prophets, heroes, poets, upward throng,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty," their great song.

N. A.

HE who does not know himself, has all his lifetime lived away from home among his neighbours, who have learned him better than he has learned himself. He who knows himself, has lived at home, and knows more of himself than his neighbours know of him.

Spring.

"O Spring, of hope and love and youth and gladness
White-winged emblem!
Whence comest thou?"—SHELLEY.

There has been no winter, and yet Spring cannot fail of its wonder and sweet surprise. It can dispense with cold and frozen barrenness for back-ground, and yet startle you with things strange and infinitely fair. To hear, the first time, the blackbird's song at sunset; to find, at the edge of a wood, under a March sun, the earliest celandine, is a quite fresh and vivid experience, though the land has hardly known the touch of frost or snow through all the shortest days. There has been no winter. Violets have bloomed every day about the currant-bush roots since October passed. The thrush, except on a few December days, has sung on, unchecked, unwearying. That wild, affluent singer of England! All through the wet and sunless January mornings I have heard him. In the first faint light of dawn, in the chill, damp air, tameless, exultant, infinitely gay, he kept his tryst with melody. No mate, no nest, to listen; no rivals to excite or challenge—just for the song's own sake, he sang and could not, would not tire.

And yet, though violet bloomed and mavis carolled, the winter through, Spring is no less Spring to-day, and the marvel of new life fills the air and the earth and the heart of man with joy. When, last night, in the gloaming, the chiff-chaff, "first and simplest of migrant warblers," sang to me, he sent the blood circling faster through my veins, though he knew not nor cared at all. The faint delicate scent of the first handful of primroses, gathered in a wet and oozy lane, brought my boyhood back and made me for one hour once more a child.

This unaging youth of nature! this eternal freshness of the old world! "You heed it not, the loss is yours." That big rounded hill there is of chalk—laid down ages back under a deep sea. Yet in a hollow of its side yesterday I gathered a fragile blue flower in bud, about two inches above ground, about three days old perhaps—a babe born on that old hillside, nourished from its soil, wooed by the sun, older still by millions of years. The old patriarch's wife is said to have laughed in scorn when she heard the angel say she should have a child in her old age. How nature must laugh, not in scorn but in joy, at the myriad young things born to her every year in *her* old age. That chiff-chaff's shout was a note of her laughter, and the sky-lark's voice is her song gone wild and reckless with joy. The old mother must needs be glad in her immortal youth, while her new-born children frolic on her bosom or play with the skirts of her manifold robe. Vainly shall one of her offspring, the pessimist man, prate of evil, misery and death. Doubtless, he is her troublesome child, and many a furrow has he managed to score across her radiant brow. Poor, petulant, troublesome man! cursing himself and hating his fellow, trampling out beauty and peace with his armies and cities and hurrying footsteps of greed. And meekly she bears with him for a while—continues her sunshine and rain, and never forgets to laugh in his face with her Spring. And soon he, too, shall learn with the rest to nestle again in her arms and deserve to be the latest and highest born of all her sons.

"You Greeks are only children," said the old Egyptian priest to Pythagoras or Plato, or some other wandering thinker from the young civilisation of Europe. "You men are but children," the old mother says to us all; "my youngest and least experienced, and you have much to learn. But you shall know my deeper secret and my inmost law. For to you I have given of my self-conscious spirit, whereby to know both yourself and me. And I have let you wander, and sometimes grow weary and wilful and vain. But only that you may come back and be my greatest and happiest lover. Already you are beginning to know me as no other child of the heavens and earth can know. Already my sky-lark's song to Spring is more to you than to its mate on the ground, as witness the chants of Shelley and Meredith in his praise. Already the primrose scent is sweeter to you than to the bee that visits it at noonday. For you have inherited my very soul; I have given you of the life my spirit, and you shall learn to be glad and serene in my sunshine and in my storms, in my bringing to life and my bringing to that which you call death. Talk not of age and of dying. On my bosom the young flowers bloom; in my heart is eternal youth; from my hands every

year the new Spring comes; and to you has been given that which belongs to the timeless, the imperishable, the divine."

W. J. JUPP.

Punning Names in Shakespeare.

Punning, says a hater of word-twisting, punning is execrable enough, but to pun upon names is worse still. Execrable or no, great wits have not thought it beneath them. Shakespeare, who dearly loved a pun, frequently indulges himself in playing upon a name. Methodically-mad Petruchio call his termagant lady his

> Super dainty Kate,
> For dainties are all cates:

and furthermore declares:

> I am he, am born to tame you Kate,
> And bring you from a wild cat to a Kate,
> Conformable, as other household Kates.

Falstaff is ever playing upon his swaggering ancient's name, telling him he will double charge him with dignities, charge him with sack, or dismissing him with, "No more, Pistol; I would not have you go off here; discharge yourself of our company, Pistol." When Bardolph announces that Master Brook has sent the knight a morning draught, Sir John exclaims: "Call him in; such Brooks are welcome to me, that overflow such liquor!" And after his misadventure at Datchet Mead he says: "Mistress Ford! I have had ford enough; I was thrown into the ford!" So, examining his pressed men, the fat rogue tells Mouldy it is the more time he was used; Shadow, that he is likely to make a cold soldier, but will serve for summer; Wart, that he is a ragged wart; and finishes by crying, "Prick me Bullcalf till he roar again!" But, like other jokers, honest Jack did not enjoy such humour when he was the butt, for it angered him to the heart when Prince Hal, setting a dish of apple-johns on the table, took off his hat, saying, "I will now take my leave of these six dry, round, old, withered knights!" When Jack Cade harangues his followers with "We, Jack Cade, so termed of our supposed father," Dick, the butcher, puts in the words, "Rather of stealing a cade of herrings;" and upon his leader's asserting his wife was a descendant of the Laceys, interpolates, "She was, indeed, a pedlar's daughter, and sold many laces."

Sometimes our great dramatist plays upon a name in most sober sadness, making Northumberland receive the fatal news from Shrewsbury field with the inquiry:

> Said he, young Harry Percy's spur was cold?
> Of Hotspur, cold-spur?

and the dying old soldier, John o' Gaunt, plays nicely with his name, to the wonderment of his unworthy nephew, as he gasps out:

> Old Gaunt, indeed; and Gaunt in being old;
> Within me grief hath kept a tedious fast;
> And who abstains from meat that is not gaunt?
> For sleeping England long time have I watch'd;
> Watching breeds leanness, leanness is all gaunt.
> The pleasure that some fathers feed upon
> Is my strict fast—I mean my children's looks;
> And therein fasting, has thou made me gaunt.
> Gaunt am I for the grave, gaunt as a grave,
> Whose hollow womb inherits nought but bones.

In his Sonnets, we find Shakespeare twisting his own name about to soften the heart of an obdurate fair one:

> Whoever hath her wish, thou hast thy Will,
> And Will to boot, and Will in overplus.
> . . . . . .
> If thy soul check thee that I come so near,
> Swear to thy blind soul that I was thy Will,
> And Will, thy soul knows, is admitted there.
> Thus far you love, my love suit, love, fulfil.
> Will fill fulfil the treasure of thy love?
> Ay, fill it full with wills, and my will one.
> . . . . . .
> Make but my name thy love, and love that still,
> And then thou lov'st me—for my name is Will.

Whether certain lines inscribed to Ann Hathaway were written by her famous husband in his courting days or not, they afford too excellent a specimen of the art of rhythmical punning on names to be passed over. In its way the following stanza stands unsurpassed:

> When Envy's breath and rancorous tooth
> Do soil and bite fair worth and truth,
> And merit to distress betray,
> To soothe the heart Ann hath a way.
> She hath a way to chase despair,
> To heal all grief, to cure all care,
> Turn foulest night to fairest day,
> Thou know'st, good heart, Ann hath a way;
> She hath a way,
> Ann Hathaway,
> To make grief bliss, Ann hath a way.

He who Died at Azim.

FROM THE ARABIC.

He who died at Azim sends
This to comfort all his friends:
Faithful friends! it lies, I know,
Pale and white, and cold as snow,
And ye say, "Abdullah's dead!"
Weeping at the feet and head,
I can see your falling tears;
I can hear your sighs and prayers;
Yet I smile and whisper this:—
"I am not the thing you kiss,
Cease your tears and let it lie
It was mine, it is not I."
Sweet friends, what the women have
For the last sleep of the grave,
Is a hut, which I am quitting;
Is a garment, no more fitting;
Is a cage, from which at last
Like a bird my soul has pass'd.
Love the inmate, not the room;
The wearer, not the garb; the plume
Of the eagle, not the bars
That kept him from those splendid stars.
Living friends, be wise, and dry
Straightway every weeping eye.
What you left upon the bier
Is not worth a single tear,
'Tis an empty sea-shell, one
Out of which the pearl is gone;
The shell is broken, it lies there,
The pearl, the all, the soul, is here.
'Tis an earthen jar whose lid
Allah sealed, the while it hid
That treasure of his treasury,
A mind that loved him; let it lie,
Let the shards be earth once more,
Since the gold is in his store.
Allah, glorious, Allah good!
Now thy world is understood,
Now the long, long wonder ends.
Yet ye weep, my foolish friends,
While the man whom ye call dead,
Lives and loves you; lost 'tis true
From the light that shines for you,
But in the light you cannot see
Of undisturbed felicity—
In a perfect Paradise
And a life that never dies.
Farewell friends! But not farewell;
Where I am ye too shall dwell.
I am gone before your face
A moment's worth, a little space,
When ye come where I have stepp'd
Ye will wonder why ye wept,
Ye will know by the love taught
That here is all and there is naught
Weep awhile, if ye are fain,
Sunshine still must follow rain;
Only not at Death, for Death
Now we know, is that first breath
Which our souls draw, when we enter
Life; which is of all life centre.
Be ye certain all seems love
Viewed from Allah's throne above.
Be ye stout of heart and come
Bravely onward to your home.
La-il Allah—Allah la,
O love Divine, O love alway!
He who died at Azim gave
This to those who made his grave.

The Daisy and the Stone.

A PARABLE.

Suppose a meadow in which a million daisies open their bosoms all at one time to the sun. On one of them, while it is yet a bud, a little stone has fallen. At once crushed and overshadowed, it still struggles bravely against all odds to expand its petals like the rest. For many days this effort is continued without success. The tiny stone (a mighty rock to the tiny flower) squats on its breast, and will not admit a single sunbeam. At length the flower-stalk, having gathered strength by its constant exertion, acquires force enough to over-balance the weight and tosses the intruder off. Up springs the daisy with a bound, and in an instant another floweret is added to the vast multitude which in that meadow drink their fill of sunlight. The sun in the heaven is not incommoded by the additional demand. The new comer receives into its open cup as many sunbeams as it would have received although no other flower had grown in all the meadow—in all the earth. Thus the sun, finite though it be, helps us to understand the absolute infinitude of its Maker. When an immortal being, long crushed and turned away by a load of sin, at length, through the power of a new spiritual life, throws off the burden, and opens with a bound to receive a heavenly Father's long-offered but rejected love, the giver is not impoverished by the new demand upon His kindness. Although a thousand millions should arise and go to the Father, each would receive as much of that Father's love as if he alone of all fallen creatures had come back reconciled to God.

EVERY one is responsible not only for what he attempts, but for what he might attempt.

Thoughts for Quiet Moments.

That a man should find God and possess Him as *his* God,—should live in the fear of Him, trust Him, and lead a holy and blessed life in the strength of this feeling,—that is the substance and the aim of religion. We can carry our conception of religion no further.—*Dr. Adolph Harnack.*

With God, the human soul not merely interprets the secret of the universe; it comprehends, and is at peace with itself. For God is the satisfaction of its thirst.—*Canon Liddon.*

Observe what direction your thoughts and feelings most readily take when you are alone, and you will then form a tolerably correct opinion of yourself.—*Bengel.*

Every man has experienced how feelings which end in themselves, and do not express themselves in action, leave the heart debilitated. We get feeble and sickly in character when we feel keenly and fail to do the thing we feel.—*Frederick W. Robertson.*

When the fight begins within himself,
A man's worth something.
. . . The soul wakes
And grows. Prolong that battle through his life!
Never leave growing, till the life to come.
—*Robert Browning.*

Virtues which have gained us the love of man must gain us the love of God.—*Mlle. De Guerin.*

Every temptation to scandal, to light gossip, to vulgarity, to little selfishnesses, when resisted, becomes a breath of real life taken into the soul.

Make yourselves nests of pleasant thoughts. None of us yet know, for none of us have been taught in early youth, what fairy palaces we may build of beautiful thought, proof against all adversity,—bright fancies, satisfied memories, noble histories, faithful sayings, treasure-houses of precious and restful thoughts.—*John Ruskin.*

The times are great: what times are little?
To the sentinel, that hour is regal
When he mounts guard.

What holds good of all moral ideas, holds good in the highest sense of religion: it is one thing to be sensible of their truth, it is another to be possessed of their power. We may recognise and acknowledge the claims of the Christian religion, and the peace and beauty of the religious life, and yet be quite incapable of raising ourselves to its level. It may hover before our eyes and shine with the radiance of a star, and yet not burn like a fire in our hearts. But the man who fails to hear the voice of God for himself is without religion.—*Dr. Adolph Harnack.*

He who persecutes a good man makes war against himself and all mankind.—*Confucius.*

The responsibility of tolerance lies with those who have the wider vision.—*George Eliot.*

Stately, lang-robit, an' steppin' at ease,
The rich men gaed up the temple ha';
Hasty, an grippin' her twa baubees,
The widow cam' efter, booed and sma'.
Their goud rang lood as it fell, an' lay
Yallow an' glintin', bonnie an' braw;
But the fowk roon' the Maister h'ard him say
The puir body's baubees was mair nor it a'.
—*George Macdonald.*

What does our religion cost us? We may judge best the reality and worth of our religion by the quality and quantity of the sacrifice in it. Sacrifice is simply love in action.

The Voluntary principle is the Protestantism of Christian activity, just as the exercise of personal judgment is the Protestantism of Christian belief. There is one thing about the Voluntaryism of the first age which we see little in this age, "*they brought the price.*" Many people try to escape from giving what they ought to give even as a just return for what they have received, or they do no more than what they are expected to do, or teased to do. True Voluntaryism creates channels where it does not find them; it wills to do good, and "where there is a will there is a way." To be a true Voluntary is not to give when we are asked to give, but to give when we are not asked. Giving is among the daily duties of the Christian life, as much as meditation and prayer.

To form a correct judgment concerning the tendency of any doctrine, we should rather look at the forms it bears in the disciples than in the teacher. For he only made it; they are made by it. The test of character and life is the truly Christian one, and it is pleasant to see that it is being recognised on all sides.

THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

The Conceited Bud.

Within a shelter'd garden grew
A little blossom white;
It was not yellow, red or blue—
It was a spotless white.

It rear'd its little head on high,
And with affected air
Cried, "What a charming thing am I,
And how extremely fair!"

It was a most conceited bud;
For if a passer-by,
But splash'd it with a speck of mud,
It would begin to cry.

The roses laugh'd to see its pride,
The lilies turn'd away;
But still the little blossom cried,
"How sweet am I—how gay!"

Within that garden dwelt some crows:
They were as black as night,
And black, as everybody knows,
Is the reverse of white.

One crow was uglier than the rest,—
He had a squinting eye,
A horrid hump upon his breast,
And wings set on awry.

And when he heard the blossom's boast,
He chuckled in his glee,
And said, "The flower admired the most,
Is the most fit for me."

He pass'd the lilies' lovely bower,
The roses in their mirth,
And with his beak plucked up the flower
That boasted of its worth.

And where he put it no one knows:
But frightful rumours said
He gave it to the little crows,
When he went home to bed!

MORAL.

Ah, children! listen to its fate,
And be not proud or vain;
Let not this lesson come too late
To save you bitter pain.

For if a crow should snatch you up,
Regardless of your moans,
On you the little crows will sup,
And crunch up all your bones.

The Duel.

The gingham dog and the calico cat
Side by side on the table sat,
'Twas half-past twelve, and what do you think?
Neither of them had slept a wink!
And the old Dutch clock and Chinese plate
Seemed to know, as sure as fate,
There was going to be an awful spate.

(I wasn't there: I simply state
What was told to me by the Chinese plate.)

The gingham dog went "Bow-wow-wow!"
And the calico cat replied, "Me-ow!"
And the air was streaked for an hour or so
With fragments of gingham and calico,
While the old Dutch clock in the chimney place
Up with its hands before its face,
For it always dreaded a family row!

(Now mind, I'm simply telling you
What the old Dutch clock declares is true.)

The Chinese plate looked very blue,
And wailed, "Oh, dear, what shall we do?"
But the gingham dog and the calico cat,
Wallowed this way and tumbled that,
And utilized every tooth and claw
In the awfulest way you ever saw,
And, oh! how the gingham and calico flew!

(Don't think that I exaggerate:
I got my news from the Chinese plate.)

Next morning, where the two had sat,
They found no trace of dog or cat;
And some folks think unto this day,
That burglars stole that pair away;
But the truth about that cat and pup,
Is that they ate each other up,—
Now, what do you really think of that?

(The old Dutch clock, it told me so;
And that is how I came to know.)

EUGENE FIELD.

Alice.

Blessings on my little Alice!
Be her heart a brimming chalice,
Full of love and free of malice.

Through life's journey, glad or weeping;
Toiling, resting; waking, sleeping;
God still have her in His keeping.

With the bread eternal feed her,
In the ways of duty speed her,
For Thy Name's sake guide and lead her.

The Last Hour.

If I were told that I must die to-morrow,
That the next sun
Which sinks should bear me past all fear and sorrow
For any one,
All the fight fought, all the short journey through,
What should I do?

I do not think that I should shrink or falter,
But just go on,
Doing my work, nor change nor seek to alter
Aught that is gone;
But rise, and move, and love, and smile, and pray,
For one more day.

And, lying down at night for a last sleeping,
Say in that ear
Which hearkens ever: "Lord, within Thy keeping
How should I fear?
And, when to-morrow brings Thee nearer still,
Do thou Thy will."

I might not sleep for awe; but peaceful, tender,
My soul would lie
All the night long; and when the morning splendour
Flushed o'er the sky,
I think that I could smile—could calmly say,
"It is His day."

But, if a wondrous hand from the blue, yonder,
Held out a scroll,
On which my life was writ, and I with wonder
Beheld unroll
To a long century's end its mystic clue,
What should I do?

What *could* I do, oh! blessed Guide and Master,
Other than this:
Still to go on as now, not slower, faster,
Nor fear to miss
The road, although so very long it be,
While led by Thee?

Step after step, feeling Thee close beside me,
Although unseen,
Through thorns, through flowers, whether the tempest hide Thee,
Or heavens serene,
Assured Thy faithfulness cannot betray,
Thy love decay.

I may not know, my God, no hand revealeth,
Thy counsels wise;
Along the path a deepening shadow stealeth,
No voice replies
To all my questioning thought, the time to tell,
And it is well.

Let me keep on, abiding and unfearing
Thy will always,
Through a long century's ripening fruition,
Or a short day's.
Thou canst not come too soon; and I can wait,
If Thou come late.

News from the Field.

BANBURY.—On Tuesday evening, March 31st, a concert was held in the schoolroom of the above chapel when a varied and excellent programme was vigorously gone through in the presence of an appreciative audience. Mr. Councillor Palmer occupied the chair. At the close the minister (Rev. H. Hill) moved, and Mr. Jas. Miles seconded, a hearty vote of thanks to the friends who had so kindly rendered service in the programme, and to the chairman who had so admirably presided over the meeting. Mr. F. T. C. Webb (organist) ably accompanied on the piano.—On Easter Sunday evening, April 5th, Dr. Tyssen, of London, gave an interesting lecture in the above chapel on the "The Apocryphal Gospels of the early period." These, he said, were six in number, one being called the Gospel of Thomas, the stories of which were also incorporated in the Gospel of Pseudo, Matthew, and the Arabic Gospel of the Infancy. Altogether a perusal of the apocryphal gospel showed that there were writers who formed allegories concerning Jesus, and readers who mistook the allegories for facts, and embellished them; and writers who composed miraculous stories concerning Jesus, sometimes imitating a story or expanding a text in the Old Testament. New circumstances suggested the possibility that many stories of the canonical gospel might have a similar origin, and confirmed the view that God does not judge us according as we form correct opinions about the facts underlying a number of obscure ancient manuscripts written in a foreign language, but according as, having regard to our capacities and circumstances, we sincerely try to learn and to do his will.—The Minister (Rev. H. Hill) took the devotional part of the service except the reading of the lessons. There was some bright singing by the choir and congregation.

LYE.—The Mutual Improvement Society still holds its meetings. On the 1st of April a paper was read by Miss Wooldridge on "Circumstantial Evidence."—On the 15th the Rev. A. W. Timmis gave a deeply interesting account of "Factory Legislation."—The Annual Sermons were preached on the 19th, by the Rev. J. C. Street, af Birmingham, who delivered two eloquent discourses, afternoon and evening. There was a fairly good attendance in the afternoon, whilst in the evening the chapel was quite crowded, all the avallable sitting accommodation being taken up. The children snd choir acquitted themselves well. Collections about as usual.—Our minister here (Mr. Wrigley) has, for the second time, been chosen Chairman of the Parish Council.

AH, but these little things! we can pray about the health of a dear child when he is ill; but we seldom think of praying for a better temper when we become vexed with any one. We can make request to be supported through a severe bereavement; but we think not of making mention of the little loss which has rendered us so uncomfortable all the day.